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ABSTRACT

Primary-grade children can learn rhythm and rhyme from nursery rhymes. But those same poems can be used to help young students make connections to letters, sounds, and word chunks. This lesson lets Mother Goose help children grow as readers and writers. During the 5-10 minutes per day for these lessons, students will: develop a feel for the rhythm of poetry as they recite, chant, and sing the nursery rhymes; connect familiar characters from the nursery rhymes with letters of the alphabet and beginning sounds; recognize and identify rhyming words, noting the familiar chunks in words like Jill and hill or wall and fall; and apply these skills in shared and interactive writing, and as they are ready, in their own writing. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. (RS)

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Growing Readers and Writers with Help from Mother Goose

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Grade Band

K-2

Estimated Lesson Time

5-10 minutes per day

Overview

This lesson will help children grow as readers and writers using the familiar words and characters of nursery rhymes. Children will be encouraged to connect the characters with letters of the alphabet, letting them serve as hooks to help children remember the letters and their sounds and use that knowledge in their writing. The familiar rhyming patterns can also be used to help students identify familiar chunks of words that they can use in their own writing. Watch Mother Goose work her magic!

From Theory to Practice

Cunningham, Patricia M. 1995. *Phonics They Use: Words for Reading and Writing*. 2e. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Hall, Dorothy P., and Patricia M. Cunningham. 1997. *Month-By-Month Reading and Writing for Kindergarten*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa Publishing.

In her book *Phonics They Use*, Patricia Cunningham includes some critical behaviors that teachers look for as we assess children's development as readers. Her list, loosely based on Marie Clay's *An Observational Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*, includes these behaviors:

- They read (or pretend to read) favorite books and poems/songs/chants.
- They recognize and can write some concrete words—their names and names of other children, favorite words from books, poems, and chants.
- They recognize if words rhyme and can make up rhymes. (43)

In *Month-By-Month Reading and Writing for Kindergarten*, Dorothy Hall and Patricia Cunningham go on to share other benefits of using rhymes:

"Rhyming activities develop one of the most critical concepts for success in beginning reading—phonemic awareness." (24)

Many parents and teachers of young children use the nursery rhymes to introduce children to rhythm and rhyme. The nursery rhyme characters become old and familiar friends.

Why not help children use their love and knowledge of the nursery rhymes to grow as readers and writers? Why not extend this connection to help them learn the alphabet, the sounds, word chunks?

That is the purpose of this lesson—to use nursery rhymes to enhance the learning of all of these skills and to have fun too!

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Student Objectives

The students will

- develop a feel for the rhythm of poetry as they recite, chant, and sing the nursery rhymes.
- connect familiar characters from the nursery rhymes with letters of the alphabet and beginning sounds.
- recognize and identify rhyming words, noting the familiar chunks in words like Jill and hill or wall and fall.
- apply these skills in shared and interactive writing, and as they are ready, in their own writing.

Resources

- A Rhyme a Week Web Site
- The Real Mother Goose Web Site
- The Mother Goose Pages Web Site
- The Enchanted Learning Web Site
- Rhyme Sequencing Cards Web Site
- Internet Public Library Web Site

Instructional Plan

Resources

1. Charts of the poems (with print large enough to be read as a group) to use for shared reading. I use some of the Nursery Rhyme Chart Series (1990) by American Teaching Aids; these are colorful charts with teaching ideas, activities, art, and individual-sized copies of the poster on the back of each nursery rhyme that can be run off for classroom use. Another alternative is just to print out your own copies of the poems.
2. Pictures of the various nursery rhyme characters and word cards with their names printed on them.
3. Highlighter tape to mark key words or letters as you use the charts.
4. A Word Wall to display pictures of the nursery rhyme characters and their names.
5. Chunking Charts
   Example: Using Humpty Dumpty's wall as the background of the chart, the students can generate other rhyming words to record on the bricks that would rhyme with "wall."
6. Tapes and CDs of nursery rhymes for your listening center—Jack Hartmann and Raffi have excellent ones.
7. Web sites. (See suggested Web Resources listed below.)

Preparation

1. Assemble the supplies listed above.
2. Prepare your Word Wall with the letters of the alphabet and room to add pictures of the nursery rhyme characters and their names. (It is helpful to allow a large enough space that you will have room to add other key words as well, such as your own students' photographs and names, significant environmental print like stop signs /s/, or labeled pictures of things you study.)
3. There are many sources of small books of the individual poems that you may choose to use occasionally. "25 Mother Goose Peek-A-Books" by Scholastic is a good resource.
4. Bookmark Web sites.

Instruction and Activities

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1. Encourage the students to join with you in reciting and singing familiar nursery rhymes.
   - Help them to develop their feel for the rhythm and rhyme of the poems.
   - Clap the rhythm of the poems.
   - Spend a few minutes each day acting out the poems, chanting them, singing them, etc.
   - Oral fluency develops with practice.

2. Introduce the nursery rhyme charts.
   - Point to the words as the children recite the poems.
   - Soon the children can use a pointer to help track the words.

3. Encourage the students to identify the initial consonant sounds and letters of familiar characters such as Jack and Jill /j/, Humpty Dumpty /h/, Little Boy Blue /b/, Mary /m/, and her lamb /l/, etc.
   - Have the students help you highlight the initial letters of the characters with highlighter tape.
   - Add the characters and their names to your Word Wall and refer to them often.
   - You can even have the children draw the pictures of the characters to give them ownership of the Word Wall.
   - When you are doing shared or interactive writing, encourage the students to help you figure out how to spell words. Teach them the strategy of connecting the sound they hear in the word they are trying to spell with one they already know. Example: We want to write the word "motorcycle." Can you think of one of the nursery rhyme characters that started with the same sound that motorcycle starts with? Who can help me write the letter that stands for that sound?
   - Students need to see this strategy modeled many times. They need many opportunities to apply this strategy of matching sounds and finding the key word on the Word Wall. Once they understand the strategy, they may begin to use it in their own writing.
   - When students are writing independently in their journals, encourage them to use the Word Wall to help them spell words. Example: You drew yourself in a hat. What would "hat" start with? Encourage the student to look at the Word Wall to match Humpty Dumpty's first sound with hat's first sound. Identify that sound with the letter Hh.
   - In the beginning, they may only label words with their initial consonant sound; later they may add other sounds they hear in that word. Many students will learn to write sentences as they gain confidence in themselves as writers.

4. Have the students identify the rhyming words in nursery rhymes.
   - Have them highlight the rhyming words.
   - Encourage them to note the chunks that are the same in each of the rhyming pairs: Ask students to identify which letters are the same in each of the rhyming words. Highlight those letters with a different color of highlighter tape.
   - Help them generate other words that would rhyme. Record the words on a Chunking Chart. Highlight the chunks that make the words rhyme. Example: Using Jack and Jill's hill as the background of the chart, the students can generate other rhyming words to record on the hill that rhyme with "Jill" and "hill".
   - Display the Chunking Charts, add to them as students think of new words to record, and give plenty of opportunities in shared and interactive writing to teach students how to use the Chunking Charts to help them read and write new words.
   - Watch for examples of their use in the students' independent writing.

5. If you choose to give students their own copies of the nursery rhymes or use any of the prepared small books of nursery rhymes, encourage students to keep these books in their browsing boxes to read during independent reading time.
6. Encourage students to read the room during center time, including reading the poetry charts.
7. Visit the Web sites listed below.
8. Watch for signs that the students are using the Word Wall and Chunking Charts to help them in their own writing.
9. Celebrate as your students apply these strategies and skills.
10. Most of all, celebrate your students as they grow as readers and writers.

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Web Resources

A Rhyme a Week
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/rimes_and_rhymes.htm
This "A Rhyme a Week" site has close to 100 nursery rhymes ready to download and print, complete with illustrations.

The Enchanted Learning Site
http://www.enchantedlearning.com/rhymes.html
The Enchanted Learning site provides a wide variety of rebus nursery rhymes ready to print and use.

The Mother Goose Pages
http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pfa/dreamhouse/nursery/rhymesABC.html
The Mother Goose Pages provide an alphabetical list of nursery rhymes. This site will provide you with the words to dozens of nursery rhymes.

The Real Mother Goose
http://trmg.designwest.com/
Visit "The Real Mother Goose—Homepage" and turn the pages of this lovely old book to enjoy the nursery rhymes we all remember.

Rhyme Sequencing Cards
http://www.enchantedlearning.com/rhymes/seq/
The Enchanted Learning site also contains nursery rhyme cards to sequence.

Internet Public Library
http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/storyhour/goose/index.html
This IPL site with Kidspace also lets you listen to nursery rhymes and read along too.

Student Assessment/Reflections

You will need to be a kid-watcher as you observe your students during shared writing and interactive writing experiences and especially during writer's workshop.

Do your students:

- Recite the nursery rhymes fluently with a feel for their rhythm and rhyme?
- Understand how to use the Word Wall to help them match sounds and write the letters that represent those sounds?
- Use the Word Wall when writing as part of a group?
- Use the Word Wall when writing independently?
- Identify the rhyming words in the nursery rhymes?
- Generate rhyming words to record on the Chunking Charts?
- Use the Chunking Charts when writing as part of a group?
- Use the Chunking Charts when writing independently?
- See themselves as readers and writers?

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NCTE/IRA Standards

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

read•write•think

International Reading Association NCTE marcopolo

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